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ABSTRACT

A second followup of 54 former learning disabled students, now 30-40 years old, was performed via questionnaires and interviews. Data were gathered for 28 college graduates and 26 high school graduates. Data from college Ss revealed a heterogeneous group regarding scholastic achievements. Lack of facility in reading was a major problem cited by students. In terms of employment, 78% reported full time positions with overall satisfaction expressed with their achievements and their positions as adults. Personal satisfaction waa high as well. Factors contributing to that satisfaction include emotional support of parents and appropriate, effective remedial instruction. The high school graduates had acquired adequate skills in the mechanical aspects of reading as well and in reading vocabulary, although they were less competent than the college group in dealing with fairly lengthy reading passages of some complexity and subtlety. Sixty-nine percent were employed full time, and fourteen of the 18 employed Ss were quite positive in comments on job satisfaction. Seventy-seven percent were living independently. The It is concluded that the future for most learning disabled individuals can be very favorable given effective school intervention, tutoring or resource help during mainstream school attendance, counseling or therapy if needed, and consistent parental understanding and support. (CL)

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Adult Outcome Related to Educational Attainment of Cove School Follow-Up Study Participants

Laura L. Rogan, Ph.D. and Lenore D. Hartman, M.A.

In 1976--eight years ago--the authors completed a follow-up study of 88 students* who had been enrolled at the Cove School for at least one year during their elementary and middle school experience. We reported on this study at the ACLD meeting in Washington (1977) and Milwaukee (1980).

The criteria used for inclusion in the 1976 study were (1) length of enrollment of at least one year, (2) chronological age of 21 or more at the time of the study, and (3) an intelligence quotient of 80 or better on the Stanford-Binet or at least one scale of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC).

The 21 year age requirement was selected because it is a legal identifier of maturity in our society. At that age most individuals have either entered the work force, or are pursuing additional formal education.

The 80 IQ figure on one scale of the WISC was used as the intellectual criterion for inclusion in the study for two reasons. First, according to Wechsler, the IQ range of 80-89 is considered "dull normal" (Wechsler, 1949, p. 16, Wechsler, 1955, p. 20) or "low average (dull)" (Wechsler, 1974, p. 26).

*91 former students or families responded to the original questionnaire; 3 former students became deceased during the course of the study.

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Second, it was felt that an IQ in that range might not be an accurate representation of a learning disabled child's ability, particularly if he was tested at a relatively young age.

The former students who participated in the 1976 study therefore comprised a group which had many elements of similiarity as well as great diversity.

1. All were white and the majority (73%) were boys.
2. All had been referred because of actual or impending school failure.
3. The schools from which the students came were all generally judged to be providing very adequate or even above average education for most of the children enrolled.
4. All were from middle or upper middle class families.
5. The educational level of most of the parents was consistent with their socio-economic status. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the fathers had college level, masters or professional educations and 83 percent were engaged in professional or managerial occupations.
6. The families were very stable in terms of mobility and divorce.
7. All valued education and academic success in their own lives as well as in the lives of their children.
8. All shared a central concern regarding the need to prepare their son or daughter for further education and

an eventual independent future.

Among the major dissimilarities in the study group participants were

1. intelligence test scores,
2. the ages at which the students were initially enrolled,
3. the ages at which they were dismissed,
4. the extent of their prior school experience,
5. the nature of the disabilities interfering with school achievement,
6. the existence in some of such handicaps as hearing, vision, cerebral palsy, ongoing speech (stuttering) and language (aphasia) problems, and personality difficulties, and,
7. the intensity of the reactive emotional responses of both child and parents to the learning and adjustment problems existing in the affected child.

Students were dismissed from Cove at any age or when they reached the school's age limit which at that time was 12 or 13 years.* Their experiences after they left also differed. They received undocumented and highly varying amounts of assistance with their studies, and the quality and kinds of special help given were extremely variable. They received various types and lengths of treatment for their emotional and adjustment problems, and their families and schools certainly responded to them in very individual ways.

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*The average length of enrollment was three years.

The methods used for collecting the data for the original study were questionnaire, interview, and psychological, achievement and personality testing. A detailed questionnaire was sent to the parents of 100 former students. Ninety-one questionnaires were completed and returned. Seventy-two of the former students consented to come in for testing and interview, and three indicated that they would participate in the interview but preferred not to take part in the testing. We learned that three former students were in life-care settings; they were not included in the interview-testing phase of the study.

The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) was used as the measure of intellectual functioning.

The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) was selected as the test of basic academic skills.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Speed) was administered to those former students who attained a 9th grade level or above on the word reading subtest of the WRAT.

The Paragraph Meaning Subtest of the Monroe-Sherman Group Diagnostic Reading Aptitude and Achievement Tests: Intermediate Form was given to those individuals who achieved less than 9th grade word reading on the WRAT.

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) was used to assess personality and motivation.

The Bender-Gestalt Test of Visual-Motor Functioning was administered for comparison with childhood test findings. Results of these last two tests will be reported at another time.

In analyzing the data collected, we found an extremely wide range of competence and achievements in the group as a whole--extending from those who had obtained graduate degrees to those who continued to need the protection of parents and sheltered work situations.

There was a college group of 29 individuals who had either graduated from four year degree-granting universities or who were undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in such programs. High school graduates numbered 35. We included in the high school group three who had obtained associate degrees from two year colleges, and those who had attempted a semester or two in college. The remaining former students fell into three groups: those who had attended EMH* programs, those who had been enrolled in multi-categorical special education classes, and those who had dropped out of school. A follow-up of the former students in these three groups is not included in the present study.

We concluded from the 1976 study that for those individuals who had completed high school or who had graduated from college the adult outcome appeared to be essentially or potentially quite favorable.

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*Educable Mentally Handicapped, the program of choice at the time for students with large disparities in skills or abilities, or in need of a carefully monitored small class environment.

The persons who participated in the first follow-up study were young adults who had just finished their formal high school or college education and were embarking on their careers. Some were still college students, close to graduation. Now they are a group of mature young adults between 30 and 40 years of age, with most between the age group 30 to 34.

We decided to make an effort to reach the former students in these two groups once more to determine whether the apparent favorable adult outcome had been sustained over this eight to ten year period. We also analyzed the 1974-76 test data according to sub-groups rather than for the follow-up group as a whole, as was done in the original study.

For this second follow-up report we successfully contacted by questionnaire and telephone interview 54 of the original group of college graduate, college student and high school graduate persons. Of the original college group of 29 all but two responded to either the questionnaire or call. One had moved away from the area and one had died. We were pleased to learn that one of the high school graduates had completed college since the original study and so should be added to the college group which now numbers 28. Eight of the original group of high school graduates could not be located. Thus for this second follow-up, the high school graduate group consists of 26.

The College Graduates

In 1974-76, eight individuals were still college students at the undergraduate level. Two were enrolled in master's programs and one was pursuing a doctoral degree. We found that the eight who were undergraduate students in 1976 had all completed their baccalaureate degrees. One had continued to the graduate level and obtained a master's degree in counseling. Neither of the two master's level students had completed their graduate work; however, one changed his area of major study and is still enrolled. The PhD candidate also shifted his career goals and took instead a second master's in Business Administration and a second bachelor's in Math-Statistics.

Twenty-three of the former Cove students who had completed college or who were still attending college came in for testing during the 1974-76 study.* On the Adult Wechsler the mean Verbal IQ of this group was 116, with a range from 97 to 137. Wechsler (1955, p. 20) defines the IQ range of 110 to 130 and above as Bright Normal to Very Superior; statistically this includes the upper 25% of the general population. Eighteen (78%) of the college graduates fell within this range. Five (22%) obtained test scores of 97 to 109 which placed them within the Average range.

The mean Performance IQ on the WAIS was average (107)

*It should be noted that 5 of the college graduates had various handicaps, namely, impaired hearing (1), limited vision (1), cerebral palsy (2), and stuttering (1). One of the individuals with cerebral palsy did not take part in the testing and the test scores of the persons with limited vision and hearing were not included in the group data.

with a range from 78 to 141, considerably broader than the range on the Verbal Scale. On the Performance Scale 11 individuals, almost half of the group (48%), were in the High Average (Bright Normal) to Superior range, and eight (35%) were within the Average range. Of particular interest is that as adults three individuals still obtained Performance IQs in the Low Average (Dull Normal) range (between 80 and 89) and one was in the Borderline range (70 to 79).*

When scores on the Verbal Scale of the WISC and WAIS were compared, we found increases (for all but one person) ranging from 2 to 36 points, with a mean increase of 13 points.

No direct comparisons can be made between the WISC and the WAIS because of the test differences. However, one may hypothesize as to possible reasons for the increase in Verbal IQ. Perhaps maturity, practice in attending and responding to questions, and many years of formal education may have contributed.

With respect to their scholastic achievements this was a very heterogeneous group. Word reading scores on the WRAT ranged from a low of 7.9 grade level to fourth year college. On the Vocabulary test of the Nelson-Denny Reading Tests, on the other hand, everyone in the group, including the two whose word reading skills were at the junior high school level, tested within or very close to the college level on Vocabulary (12.9 to 15+). For some of the former students the Reading

*In the 1981 revision of the WAIS (WAIS-R), p. 28) Wechsler changed the terminology from "Bright Normal" to "High Average" and "Dull Average" to "Low Average."

Comprehension test posed somewhat greater difficulties than the Vocabulary reading test. Approximately two-thirds (14 or 61%) of the college graduates scored within the college level on the Reading Comprehension test. However, seven, almost one third (30%) still scored within the 10th to 12th grade range. One person scored at the low eighth grade level and one at the sixth grade level. Three whose word reading scores were the weakest on the WRAT were able to score considerably higher (grade 10.8 to 15) when given the benefit of contextual material.

Certainly this disparity between the automatic or mechanical aspects of the reading process and the college level demands for critical and evaluative reading imposed significant hardships on these students in their quest for a higher education. The pattern of reading comprehension and vocabulary scores superior to word recognition scores suggests that contextual cues were used with benefit and that these individuals made excellent use of their superior conceptual and language abilites. Yet by their own admission several of these former students reported on their need to spend many hours in study, to reread material often several times and to exercise great care in the compensatory monitoring of their reading which their lack of mechanical facility required.

On the WRAT Spelling and Math Computation tests the college group obtained lower mean scores than on any of the

three reading tests. Spelling grade level scores ranged from 5.5 to 15 with a mean of 10. Only four of the group (17%) had spelling skills at the college level (Grade 13 and up). Twelve (52%) had high school level spelling skills (Grades 9 to 12) and seven (30%) had not attained more than elementary school spelling proficiency (5.5 to 8.4).

The distribution of scores on the Math Computation test was comparable to that obtained in spelling. The mean grade level in Math was 10 with a range from 6 to 16. Again, only four individuals (17%) had math proficiency at a college level. Seven (30%) were competent at the high school level and 12 (52%) scored at the elementary level (5.7 to 8.5).

Poor spelling skill was regarded by the former students as annoying and as a hardship in any written work but not nearly as frustrating as the lack of facility in reading. Those who lacked proficiency in math computation generally perceived math as an area of weakness or disability and dealt with it by avoiding courses or areas of major study which required math. Some of the participants with fifth and sixth grade math skills expressed some uneasiness about their weakness in math, usually at the level of dealing with major expenditures and the complexities of annuities, interest and investments.

The employment status of the college group is essentially as positive as in 1976. Twenty-two of the 28

college graduates (78%) reported that they were employed in full-time positions. Two were working part-time (the visually handicapped individual and one who was a part-time student). One had returned to school as a full-time student. Two were unemployed and actively seeking employment and one was hospitalized. All but two have worked steadily during the intervening years. Many are still in the same fields as before with several enjoying promotions or advancement to positions of greater responsibility.

Two for various reasons had resumed work in the fields for which they had originally trained and which they had left temporarily. One was a young man, trained as an accountant, who had taken additional course work at a master's level in therapeutic recreation. Apparently because of limited employment opportunities he had returned to accounting and was volunteering time and effort in working with the elderly. He is continuing his master's studies in gerontology.

Another, an electrical engineer, had successfully built up sales of industrial environmental control equipment and was offered a larger territory by his company with concomitantly greater income but along with it greater demands. He began to feel that despite his success in sales he would gain greater satisfaction in anthropology which had always fascinated him. He left his sales position with the serious intention of obtaining a master's degree in anthropology. However, he

decided instead to return to engineering (his college major) and to satisfy his longing to become an anthropologist by making it his avocation. He is now employed in the aerospace industry as an automatic test engineer and devotes his leisure time to anthropology. He has become a recognized authority on the Florida Seminole Indians, leading archeological digs and tours.

One young man who was hoping to build a career in photography transferred instead to a position as sales manager for a large hotel chain. Only one made a change from a position with considerable responsibility and stress at a managerial level to one which was evidently less stressful. He moved from a production control coordinator and special projects analyst to on-line production work for a large company manufacturing small engine parts. He wrote in his questionnaire that he now feels at peace.

A number of the college group continued to take courses to broaden and improve their existing skills. One added computer programming to his present scientific knowledge. Another took a course in music composition, and is now composing and working part-time editing a weekly newspaper. A third had enrolled for courses in Illinois law. She was a young woman who eight years ago had not attended college. In the meantime she completed her work for a BS degree in criminal justice as well as becoming a paralegal at the AA level. She

is now employed on a part-time basis in a law-firm in Illinois while completing her Illinois paralegal qualifications.

Several had made significant career changes. The young man in the Marine Corps was sent to law school by the Marine Corps and is now a military lawyer with ambitions to become a judge at some future time. Another young man, trained as an electronics technician, had been on assignment with a Woods Hole oceanographic expedition to the Galapagos Islands. When that project ended he returned to college to obtain a degree as an electrical engineering technician. He is now employed on the West Coast with a large company and expects to be transferred during the next half year to Spain--an assignment he is looking forward to with keen anticipation. Similar reports came from others in the group: The young woman working as an insurance claims processor had completed her certification as an LD teacher and was now looking for a position, the library archivist (the PhD candidate with a second master's and second bachelor's degree) was changing over to statistical market research, the LD teacher/educational diagnostician had left teaching for a career in sales, and the housewife--an art history major--was now divorced and working as an employment recruiter. One left a managerial position to return to school to study commercial art.

This group, despite their early learning problems, and the continuing effort which academic course work required of

them had not lost faith in the power of education to shape their lives nor had they lost confidence in their ability to succeed in an academic setting. They knew that their return to college course work would again place heavy requirements upon them but they knew what they each individually needed to do to be successful. They were willing to take the risk and make the commitment to reach the goals they had each set for themselves.

In 1976 we reported that with some exceptions, the college group as a whole expressed satisfaction with their achievements and the position they had attained as adults. The response of this group to our current inquiry was, again with a few exceptions, equally positive. They were eager to report on their progress and present status and seemed pleased by our continued interest.

In terms of job satisfaction, 18 of the 24 employed persons, almost three-fourths of the group, expressed highly positive feelings about their present occupations. Two expressed some financial frustration, one stating that he would like to earn more now that he was married and had a child, the other commenting that his business was not growing as fast as he would wish--feelings that could be shared with many in our society. Two were not interested in their work (one of the accountants and one doing data processing) but they saw their present occupations as interim jobs while planning and preparing for positions more to their liking. One, a rather

idealistic person, was disenchanted with what he perceived as "politics" in his workplace.

Life satisfaction was judged to be highly positive by 19 (68%) of the 28 college graduates and more satisfying than not by another three. Nine were married and two were planning to be married soon. One of the women was divorced. The married persons were enthusiastic about their personal lives and to say that they described their marriages as happy is almost an understatement. Most of the singles reported having friends and an active social life and indicated that they would like to marry eventually.

Three men had had obvious personality problems of a non-relating type as children. As adults one seemed to have found satisfaction in his work and progress toward personal independence and, to the extent that he did not express a need for close personal relationships, seemed quite content. Two were still seeking to improve their personal lives. One of them was working toward change through psychotherapy hoping for greater happiness, and the other was still caught up in a struggle of denial and negative reactions to personal and environmental stresses.

Of the five former students who had children only one reported any problems. This was a dyslexic father who was concerned that his 11 year old son was experiencing the same kind of reading problems that he had had at the same age.

All but six were living independently either with their spouses or as singles in their own apartments. The art student had moved back with his parents for financial reasons while going to school and two who had significant physical handicaps (one quadriplegic man and a visually impaired woman) were living with family members for obvious reasons. A fourth young man continued to live with his widowed mother.

There was one in the group for whom the adult outcome, while seemingly bleak, was still undetermined. This was a man who despite his college education and excellent verbal skills had been unable to hold any of the jobs he had tried or to find a job which he could do satisfactorily. He had an extremely large 40 point discrepancy between High Average Verbal and Borderline Performance functioning. It was as though he were two persons, depending upon the task that needed to be done. Verbally, he could converse with very good language and vocabulary in an interesting manner as might be expected from any person with at least average intelligence. When a task had other dimensions such as the perception of physical relationships and the organization of space and time and materials, his functioning fell to the level of a person with the borderline intellectual capabilities indicated by his Performance IQ. However, despite the fact that he was not employed, he had not given up and was still trying to find an occupation in which he could function competently. With some

readjustment of his own goals, skillful guidance, and fortuitous circumstances this may still be a possibility.

One person in the college group would need to be judged as unsuccessful. This was a young woman with Average Verbal abilities but with Performance abilities at the high Borderline-Low Average level. She had personality problems dating from very early childhood. The various psychotherapeutic efforts that had been tried throughout the years had not modified the basic personality problems and she was at the time of our contact a patient in a psychiatric hosptal.

With the exception of these two individuals, the college graduates as a whole could be described as very good achievers. While learning from mistakes is an acknowledged way to add to our knowledge, the positive aspects of experience can also teach us a great deal. What was done well in the lives of these successful LD persons? What "went right"?

Several things were "right". They received appropriate, effective remedial instruction during their Cove School experience which laid the foundation of basic competencies in the necessary scholastic skills and helped establish their concept of themselves as successful learners. At various points after leaving Cove they were given help as needed through tutoring, parental assistance with their studies, counseling or therapy. This not only helped them over

hurdles but they also learned that certain skills or a body of knowledge can be mastered through instruction and application. They had the emotional support of at least one or in many cases both parents in their efforts to overcome obstacles throughout their growing years.

The results of these efforts were that we were now seeing a group of adults whose present status in life showed us several facets. They had proved themselves to themselves, through their achievements. They had successfully completed college, they had found on the whole highly satisfying occupations, and they had achieved financial and emotional independence.

They had proved themselves to their families. As the child who needed the special provisions, the nurturing and support perhaps to a greater extent than their siblings, their accomplishments were confirmation of the parents' efforts and commitment.

Their capabilities and achievements had been confirmed by the world outside their families. They had achieved in the school environment; they had successfully entered and maintained themselves in work; their acceptability as persons had been confirmed by their having found a marital partner, or close personal relationships and friends.

They had gained perspective on their learning disabilities, and could accept and discuss them without

embarrassment or great pain, some even publicly. Some have talked to parent groups, classes at Cove, or groups within the community. They had now reached a point of maturity where they were extending themselves beyond their own accomplishments to their children or the wider community.

The high school graduates

The educational experiences of the 34 former students in the High School group were very diverse. The majority (24, 71%) had all or part of their education within the mainstream of a regular urban or suburban high school. However, only six had their high school work in regular programs. Fourteen reported having been in "basic" or "essentials" levels classes for all or most of their subjects. Six (two in the regular program and four in the basic tracks) were given varying amounts of learning assistance at various times by learning disability resource teachers. Five attended specialized private residential high schools designed for learning disabled or slow-learning students and one required a treatment hospital because of severe emotional problems. Two attended other types of specialized programs, one for the physically handicapped and one a self-contained class for learning disabled students within a public high school. Two others completed their high school education through correspondence and GED equivalency in the Army. Several attended more than one high school in the effort to find an educational environment that would best match

the students' needs.

Twenty of the High School graduates had taken some post high school academic or technical courses with varying degrees of success. Three had obtained Associate of Arts degrees (AA). Five took technical courses which led directly to related employment, such as secretarial, keypunch operator, travel agent and electrician's apprentice. Two had taken technical training in auto mechanics and sheet metalwork but had not completed the programs. One had taken training in working with the deaf (including learning sign-language). Eight others had taken mainly liberal arts courses, most in community colleges, but chose not to continue. Two had training through vocational rehabilitation workshops which did not prove fruitful for employment.

Nine, or approximately one-third (35%) of the high school graduates had additional handicaps. These included four with severe speech or language problems, and five with physical limitations (three with cerebral palsy, and two with obvious motor awkwardness). Consequently their habilitation required more comprehensive treatment efforts than the remediation of the learning disabilities alone. The learning disability of four of the high school graduates had to be described ultimately as a profound dyslexia, minimally responsive to all remedial efforts attempted.

Twenty-nine of the high school graduates participated

in the testing which was part of the original follow-up study. On the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Adults (WAIS) the mean IQ on the Verbal Scale was Average (102). However, the range was very broad, extending from a low in the Borderline range obtained by a severely dyslexic girl (a boarding school cook) to a high in the Very Superior range (a girl in clerical employment). On the Performance Scale the mean IQ was also Average (93), somewhat but not significantly lower than the Verbal IQ. The range was also very broad, again extending from Borderline (bank messenger, receptionist, and one unemployed young man) to the Superior level (obtained by the dyslexic school cook).

The pattern of change from child to adult testing paralleled that seen in the college group: Both WAIS Verbal and Performance IQs showed an increase. The mean increase in Verbal IQ was 10 points and in Performance IQ 7 points.

It is of interest to note that nearly 3/4 of these high school students had acquired very respectable high school and early college level skills in the mechanical aspects of reading, as well as in reading vocabulary. The WRAT Word Reading Mean Score was grade 10.9 with a range from 4.8 to 17.4. The Nelson-Denny Reading Vocabulary mean score was Grade 13 with a range from 8.9 to over 15. In this respect they did not differ greatly from the college group which obtained a mean grade of 12.3 on the WRAT Word Reading and 14.4 on the

Nelson-Denny Reading Vocabulary Test. A considerable difference was seen on the Nelson-Denny Reading Comprehension test, however, as the college group obtained a mean grade of 13 compared with the 9.9 mean of the high school group.

The pattern of scores obtained by the competent readers in the high school group and the college group also differed. In the college group, vocabulary and reading comprehension scores were both higher than the single-word reading score, whereas in the high school group the word-reading and vocabulary scores both exceeded the reading comprehension score. Apparently, the high school group even with comparable technical skills was less competent than the college group in dealing with fairly lengthy reading passages of some complexity and subtlety both linguistically and conceptually.

The WRAT mean grade score in Arithmetic Computation for the high school group was lower than either the Word Reading or Spelling scores. The mean Arithmetic Computation grade was only 5.8 with a range from an incredible 2.3 to 9.5. Although the arithmetic computation score should presumably be independent of the reading and spelling scores, it was found in comparing the poor readers with the competent readers that the arithmetic score was higher for the good readers than for the poor ones. Thus the poor readers were not only poor readers and spellers, they were also poor in arithmetic. Could this be the consequence of some underlying difficulties or disabilities

affecting many areas of academic learning, or of lack of appropriate learning experiences, or of motivational factors affecting the self-concept of these poor readers who must regard themselves as poor learners?

Of the present group of 26 high school graduates, 18 (69%) were employed full time, one was employed part-time, one was a college student, one a housewife, and five were unemployed. Three of the unemployed persons and the one in part-time employment were actively looking for work. Two were receiving Social Security assistance.

A number of occupations was reported. One young woman, working as a travel agent when interviewed in 1976 had completed her AA degree and was now in the Army in Personnel Management. A young man also with an AA degree who was with a ski patrol in 1976 described himself now as a self-employed real estate investor and developer. He expressed satisfaction with his work because he was making a good living and he was "successful". Of the two who had taken secretarial courses in business colleges one had a 16 year employment record in processing insurance claims, and the other was now pleased to be working as an assistant sales person for a radio station. The electrician's apprentice had become a licensed electrician and was working for a municipality; the pharmaceutical company's assembly-line worker was now a computer operator. This was apparently a very good move for her as she indicated a

high level of job satisfaction, writing that she "loves computers". A married man was now working in a family business which offered some protection because of his physical problems (diabetes) after having been steadily employed for 16 years by a major retail company. Others were employed in positions that did not require formal training beyond high school but did involve learning "on the job". These included senior stockman for a public utility, city sanitation worker, intensive care of the retarded or elderly, punch press operator and maintenance work of various kinds. A young man in purchasing and inventory control reported taking courses required by the company in computers, effective listening, writing skills, etc. The woman who had learned sign language for the deaf was unable to find employment utilizing her skill and learned instead to do housecleaning in a nursing home.

Two of the high school graduates--a housewife and a college student--were not gainfully employed. The housewife was divorced and singly responsible for two children with learning disabilities. The college student was and is enrolled in a special program for dyslexics after having worked in a number of unskilled jobs before deciding to return to school. The individual in part-time employment in a rehabilitation center had a spotty work record in that he had attempted a variety of unskilled jobs such as pumping gas, dishwasher, stock boy, maintenance, etc. The jobs had been of short

duration or had been lost because of inefficiency, forgetfulness, slowness, etc. Although quite capable verbally, this young man had a spastic hemiplegia which realistically limited his employment opportunities. However, along with the physical handicap were some rather unrealistic goals and dependence on his family. He had taken some college courses and a two year program in Business Administration. He spoke vaguely of obtaining a job with a "progressive" company and "realizing his potential."

Five of the high school group were unemployed and three were actively seeking employment. One was a woman with clerical and key-punch skills who lost her job after 12 years with the same company. She had been volunteering while seeking employment. One person had completed two years of a four year sheet-metal training program. He then moved to another state where he was able to work for several years in this trade. When he returned to Illinois he found he did not qualify for union membership and so was unable to find work. He thought he would like to try house painting. The other unemployed person--a woman--had a work history of short-term, unskilled jobs, such as packaging laundry bags for hospitals, delivering advertising flyers, working as kitchen help, etc. She was somewhat awkward and not well-coordinated, still rather impulsive and socially inept, and found herself unhappily, despite her friendly nature, the object of rejection and

ridicule on the part of some of her co-workers.

The other two unemployed persons were not likely ever to be successful in non-subsidized employment. One had a long history of being unable to relate to others despite being very bright and having had many years of psychiatric help. The other was physically handicapped by a spastic paraplegia and mild speech defect. Both were receiving Social Security Disability benefits.

Fourteen of the 18 employed persons were quite positive in their comments regarding job satisfaction. Typical remarks were, "the pay is good," "conditions are good," "I'm appreciated", "the work is challenging", "the work is interesting, enjoyable", "good pay, enjoyable work, secure", etc. Others, while perhaps not as eloquent or enthusiastic, were realistic in their appraisals, and seemed to have accepted their employment status. Representative comments were "it's a living", "it's a job I can do and earn money".

Others conveyed a sense of being depressed and worried about possibly losing the job or distressed by having lost a job despite several years with the company and strong motivation to do well. They were clearly vulnerable to changes within the workplace such as reorganization, change in supervisors to one who might be less sensitive or tolerant, phasing out of departments, etc.

Two men doing maintenance work were rather

dissatisfied. The custodian did not like to "pick up after people" and the other maintenance worker was still wishing he could do a job with greater status. He had tried working in the post-office but found he could not cope with the pressure.

Twelve (nearly half) of the high school group were or had been married. Eight were still married but four--three women and one man--were divorced. Nine--six of the ones who were married and three of the divorced persons--had children. Three reported having children with problems--learning disabilities and speech--for whom special education services were being provided by their respective public schools.

Despite the various learning problems that this group of high school graduates had had and were still having, they had made impressive progress toward managing their own lives, independent of their parents. Twenty (77%) were living either with their spouses or in apartments or condominiums. Three unemployed persons were living with parents for financial reasons, although for one this was a preference even before she lost her job. The college student also lived with his parents, not only to save money but for the comfort as well. The others who were not living independently were the two on Social Security payments; one was living in subsidized housing for the handicapped and elderly and the other was living in a boarding house with supervision by a social worker.

Financial management at the level of taxes, tax

shelters, mortgages, annuities, large installment purchases and the like was an area in which many needed the advice of parents. A few reported problems with basic money management, such as budgeting and keeping a checkbook. Several commented that they would like to earn a higher salary and not worry about bills; one was described as a "spendthrift" by her father, another reported that her daughter was managing her own expenditures but mother added, "I don't know how efficiently but I stay out of it."

Several of the group were still very troubled by the effects of their learning disabilities on their employment and personal lives to the extent that they were still searching for ways to change. For some it took the form of consulting with a "mentor" or therapist. Others were driven to seek further remediation. One took several of the popularly advertised memory improvement courses which he felt were helpful. Two enrolled in a local university adult learning disability program; one reported that it was very helpful, while the other's experience was still quite short. One enrolled in a university program which included intensive remedial work. He wrote, "I am very satisfied with my life at present. I am learning a lot.... The people (here) are better than one can hope for. (It) is a dream come true."

Despite the problems still to be resolved by some of these individuals, the achievements and adjustments of the two

groups are impressive. The values and resources of the families undoubtedly contributed greatly to the students' success. First, these were intact and stable families. The few parental divorces occurred after the children were grown. Second, these middle to upper middle class families regarded education as a necessity and provided the means to achieve whatever was needed to be done. Additional help such as therapy or counseling as well as tutoring was provided as the students continued their post-Cove education. In general, these were active and interested parents who monitored their children's progress throughout the educational process.

In most instances the college graduate group more closely matched the achievements and socio-economic status of their families than did the high school group. The families of the college graduates have been able to experience real pleasure and satisfaction with the outcome of their children's remarkable efforts. In contrast, the families of almost two-thirds of the high school graduates have been more consistently involved over a longer period of time in their children's continuing development as adults. However, almost all the families of the high school group were most accepting, supportive and understanding of their children's learning disabilities and their need for ongoing positive support and active guidance in practical matters.

Developing healthy self-esteem and coming to terms with

their limitations has been a difficult and longer process for many in the high school graduate group. In contrast, all but a few of the college graduates appeared to have been successful in the development of these aspects of their personalities.

Based on the results of this survey, we would conclude that given intensive effective intervention during the elementary and middle school years, tutoring or resource help during mainstream school attendance, counseling or therapy if needed, and consistent parental understanding and support, the outcome for most learning disabled individuals can be very favorable.

1984: OCCUPATIONS OF FORMER COVE SCHOOL STUDENTS

COLLEGE GRADUATES

Professional and Kindred
- Accountant (2)
- Administrative Data Processor
- Automatic Test Engineer (aerospace industry)
- Computer Programmer and Analyst
- Electrical Engineering Technician
- Employment Recruiter
- Lawyer (military law)
- Newsletter (weekly)
- Photographer (self-employed, has own studio)
- Teacher, Learning Disabilities
- Urban Planner

Technical
- Paralegal

Sales
- Commercial Real Estate
- Manufacturers Representative (Advertising)
- Printing Sales for Printing Company
- Sales Representative (for two companies)

Managerial
- Executive Director, Camp for Physically Handicapped
- Sales Manager (large hotel chain)
- Supervisor Distribution Operations (Materials Management Company)
- Warehouse Supervisor

Clerical
- Clerical and Public Relations (temporary)

Medical Service
- Patient Representative in large hospital

Machine Shop
- Production Work, large manufacturer of engine parts

Maintenance Service
- Maintenance Engineer (retirement home, hotels, university)

Student
- Commercial Art

Unemployed (2)

Occupational classifications from Dictionary of Occupational Titles, U.S. Department of Labor, 4th ed. 1977.

Laura L. Rogan, Ph.D.
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HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Technical
- Computer Operator
- Licensed Electrician

Managerial
- Senior Stockman, in charge of handling, distributing materials
- Purchasing and Inventory Control (Bank)
- Real Estate Investor, Developer - self-employed

Clerical
- Insurance Claims
- Messenger and Office Distribution
- Bank President's Page

Sales
- Assistant Sales (radio station)

Medical Service
- Intensive care of retarded
- Care for children, elderly (volunteer and part-time)

Mainterance Service
- Building maintenance
- City Sanitation worker
- Custodian
- Housecleaning in nursing home

Military
- Personnel Management (U.S. Army)
- Bos'n's Mate, 2nd class (U.S. Navy)

Machine Shop
- Punch Press Operator

Miscellaneous
- Opening boxes, putting clothing on hangers

Housewife
- (with two children)

Student
- State university with intensive LD program

Unemployed, Looking for Work (3)
- Painting, anything
- Rehabilitation program at present time

Unemployed (2)
- Social Security Disability recipients

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